

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 5, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

At a time when challenges of historic import face America, bipartisan cooperation and principled compromise are needed more than ever. Unfortunately, certain Senate traditions run contrary to forming bipartisan consensus. In particular, our tradition of weekly caucus lunches – with Democrats and Republicans meeting in separate rooms – has accentuated the tensions that pull the two parties apart and limited opportunities for honest dialogue and reasoned exchange.

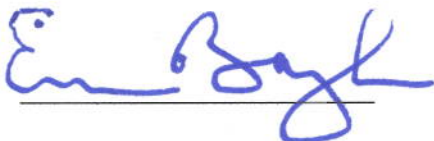
We believe the American people would be well served if both parties agreed to sponsor monthly meetings where all senators could gather together to informally discuss pressing issues. We are under no illusion that such meetings are a panacea that will lead to easy agreement. We do believe, however, that bringing all senators together on a more regular basis will maximize the chances of reasoned discourse, and that the informal exchange of ideas is fertile soil for problem solving.

We urge you to consider changes to the Senate schedule that will allow for monthly meetings of all senators. We recognize that our weekly caucus lunches serve an important party-organizing function. However, at a time when America faces so many challenges, both parties must be willing to place the needs of country above the needs of party. These joint meetings would also send an important signal to Americans who are losing faith in the ability of both parties to solve our collective challenges. We know the American people want us to work together and we should prove to them that we are listening.

We look forward to discussing this idea with you in greater detail and working with you both to improve bipartisan cooperation in the Senate.

Respectfully,

Senator Evan Bayh



Senator Lindsey Graham

